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ABSTRACT

As one of the working papers in the final report of the Arizona Board of Regents' Task Force on Excellence, Efficiency and Competitiveness, this document makes a comparison between Arizona's system of higher education and those of other states, in order to place Arizona's higher education efforts in perspective. The number of universities and colleges in Arizona and the number of degrees awarded by universities and colleges in Arizona are compared to those in each of the other states. These data are normalized with respect to state tax base and state population. Population and taxes, private schools, two-year public institutions, and four-year and above public institutions are discussed. Arizona has established a disproportionately small number of private colleges and universities. It also has the smallest number of four-year and above public universities. It produces the most baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees per university. Recommendations are: to continue to concentrate the available limited resources in the three existing universities, their branch campuses, and educational centers; to be constantly vigilant for ways to eliminate unnecessary duplication of academic programs within the universities; and to insist that universities more effectively concentrate resources in select programs which can rise to prominence in ways consistent with university mission. An appendix provides a key for the graphs included in the report. (SM)

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ARIZONA'S SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN COMPARISON TO THOSE OF OTHER STATES

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GEORGE H. DAVIS

ABSTRACT

To place Arizona's higher education efforts in perspective, it is instructive to compare the number of universities and colleges in Arizona with the number of universities and colleges in each of the other states; and to compare the number of degrees awarded by universities and colleges in Arizona with the number of degrees awarded by universities and colleges in each of the other states. To draw meaningful comparisons, it is essential to adjust for state tax base and state population. The observations presented are based on 1985 data.

Taking population into consideration, Arizona is among seven states that have the fewest private schools per unit population. The establishment of a relatively large number of 2-year public institutions (community colleges) in Arizona may in part reflect a need to fill a void satisfied in many other states by 2-year and 4-year private colleges. Compared with Arizona, only three states have lower ratios of private institutions to 2-year public institutions.

Arizona is among eight states that have three or fewer "4-year and above"[1] public institutions. Only one state has a fewer number of 4-year and above public universities per capita than Arizona. Arizona has the fewest number of such universities per unit of state tax collections.

Data describing the number of bachelor's degrees generated in 4-year and above public universities in each of the states show that Arizona lies exactly at the median (10,500 degrees in 1985). Measured in terms of number of bachelor's degrees per university, Arizona is the most productive of any state in the nation. The same is true of production of graduate and professional degrees.

Thus, when first-order characteristics of higher education are viewed nationally, Arizona is seen to have a number of striking features:

(1) Arizona has established a disproportionately small number of private colleges and universities.

(2) When adjustments are made for population and state tax collections, Arizona is seen to have the fewest number of 4-year and above public universities.

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(3) Of all the states, Arizona produces the most of baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees per university.

Arizona is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in regard to population and state tax collections. Arizona is at the median in both resource categories. However, by minimizing the number of 4-year and above public universities, Arizona appears to have established a very favorable competitive position in the marketplace of higher education. Of all the states, Arizona has established the least overextended, most productive infrastructure of public universities. Arizona is by no means overextended, and this permits the opportunity for the state to concentrate its resource in ways that will enhance the value of higher education it provides.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Continue to concentrate the available limited resources in the three existing universities (UofA, ASU, NAU), their branch campuses, and educational centers.

(2) Recognizing that available budget resources will not permit the building of excellence in all academic programs, insist that the universities more effectively concentrate resources in select programs which, by virtue of inherent strategic advantages, can rise to prominence in ways consistent with university mission.

(3) Be constantly vigilant for ways to eliminate unnecessary, unwarranted duplication of academic programs or subprograms within or among the three Arizona universities.

In short, quality and value of higher educational opportunities are apt to improve in direct relation to the extent that resources can be judiciously but forcefully allocated within the system and within each university. We should not fail to take fullest advantage of the inherent first-order competitive edge that Arizona derives from its economy of scales.

INTRODUCTION

To place Arizona's higher education efforts in perspective, it is instructive to compare the number of universities and colleges in Arizona with the number of universities and colleges in each of the other states. Similarly, to evaluate one aspect of Arizona's productivity in higher education, it is instructive to compare the number of degrees awarded by universities and colleges in Arizona with the number of degrees awarded by universities and colleges in each of the other states. In order to draw meaningful comparisons, it is essential to normalize the data with respect to state tax base and state population.

ALLEGORY

Visualize the higher education efforts in the State of Arizona as a constellation composed of the three 4-year and above public institutions, the sixteen 2-year public institutions, the seven 4-year private institutions, and the one 2-year private institution (see Table 1 for the names of these schools).

TABLE 1

PUBLIC 4 YEAR

Arizona State University
Northern Arizona University
University of Arizona

PUBLIC 2 YEAR

Arizona Western College
Central Arizona College
Cochise College
Eastern Arizona College
Gateway Community College
Glendale Community College
Mesa Community College
Mohave Community College
Navajo Community College
Northland Pioneer College
Phoenix College
Pima Community College
Rios Salado Community College
Scottsdale Community College
South Mountain Community College
Yavapai College

PRIVATE 4 YEAR

Graduate

American Graduate School of Management
Western International University

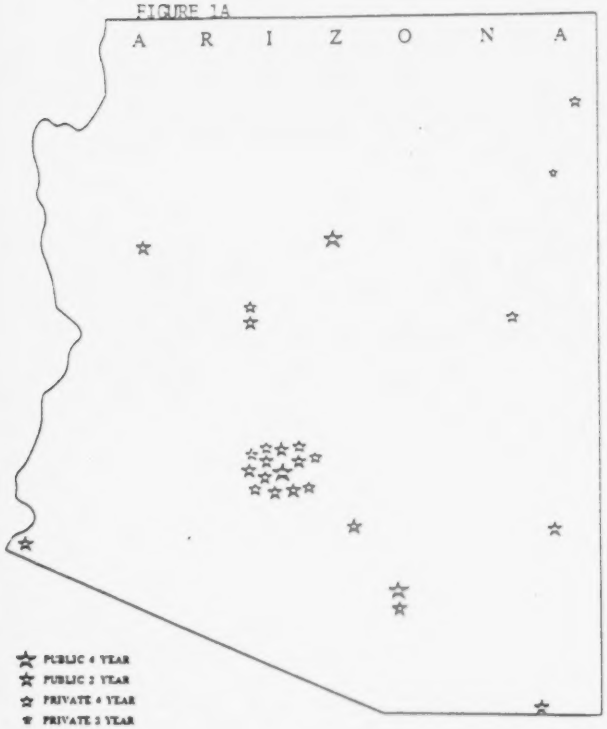
Baccalaureate

American Indian Bible College
Arizona College of the Bible
Grand Canyon College
Prescott College
Southwestern Conservative Baptist Bible College

PRIVATE 2 YEAR

College of Ganado

FIGURE 1A



If the locations of these institutions were plotted with bigger stars and smaller stars according to size, a constellation would emerge that would begin to describe, at least superficially, some first-order characteristics of higher education in Arizona (Figure 1A).

Perspective is added by placing the constellation in a backdrop that displays the population of Arizona and Arizona's annual state tax collections. Some of the energy emitted from the whole constellation (not just single stars) can be measured by totalling the number of graduates that issue from all of the institutions in a single year. (The lifetime effect of the energy represented by each of the graduates will not be known for some time).

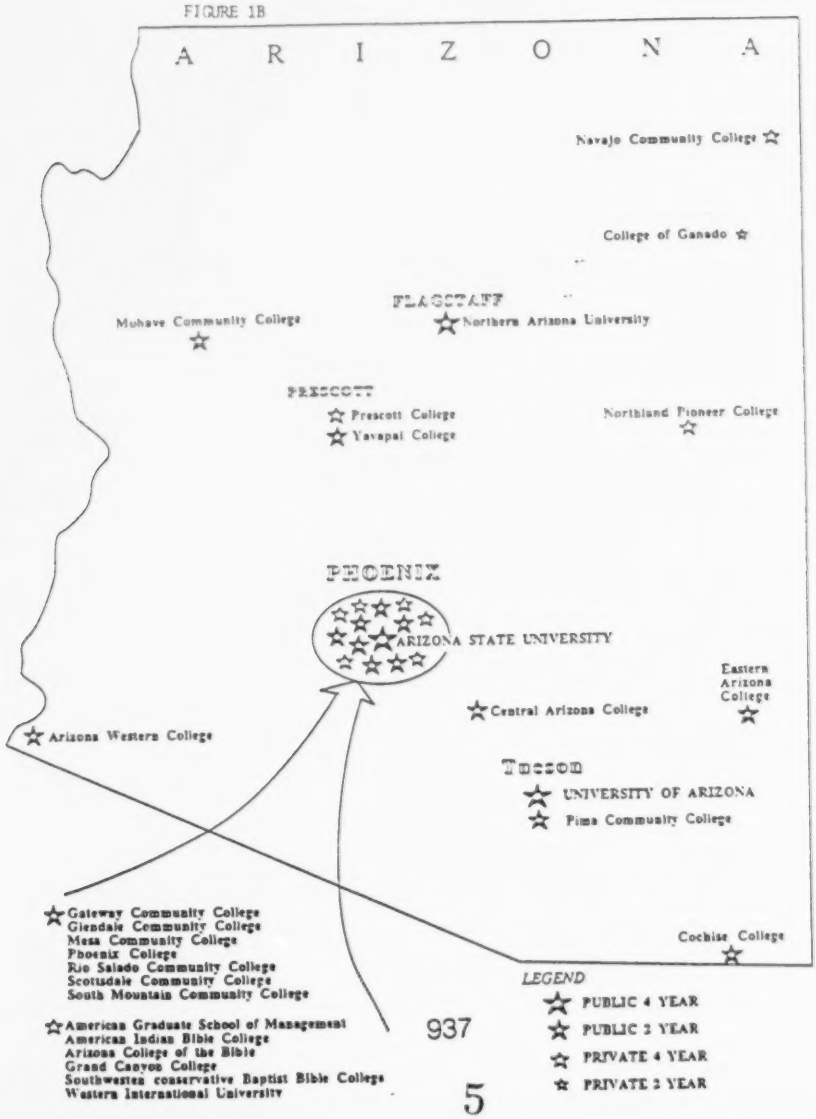
"Constellations of higher education" can be prepared in similar manner for each of the other states. The images that emerge invite questions, such as: How does Arizona's constellation of higher education compare with those of other states? How much energy is being generated, not only in absolute terms, but also proportionately, taking into consideration population and tax revenue?

Comparisons invited by such questions may give us a clearer picture of the first-order characteristics of higher education in Arizona, including numbers of universities and colleges, ratios of public to private universities, and degree production of universities, state by state. We may learn that the number and type of Arizona universities are typical of many other states. Or perhaps we may learn that we are unique. We may learn that we generate an average

number of degrees per university per year. Or perhaps we may learn that we are unusually productive. We may decide that the planning and decisions made over the years by the legislature, the board, and the university presidents have brought us to a favorable competitive position of efficiency and productivity compared with other states. Or we may decide that this is not the case.

The Arizona constellation is then the object of focus of this paper (Figure 1B).

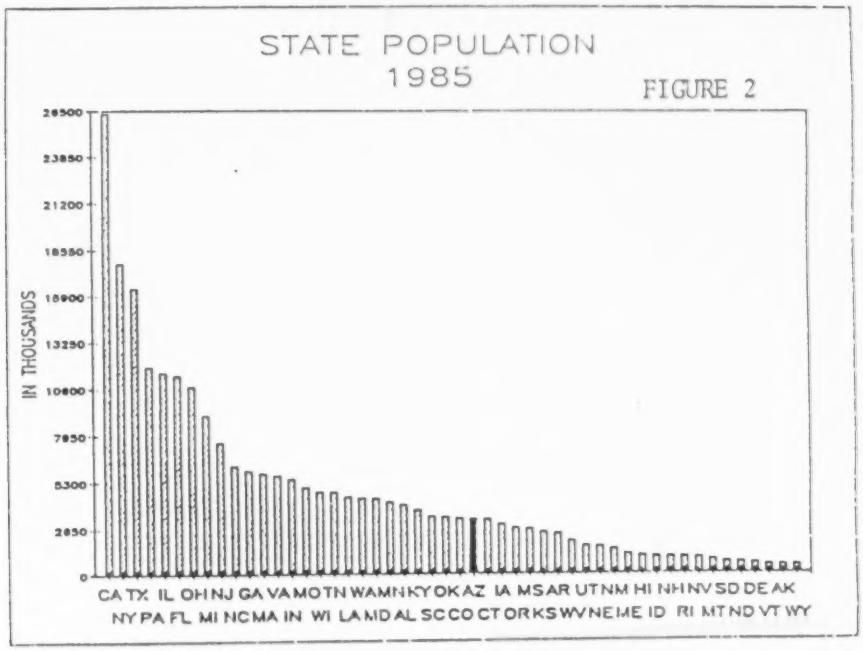
FIGURE 1B

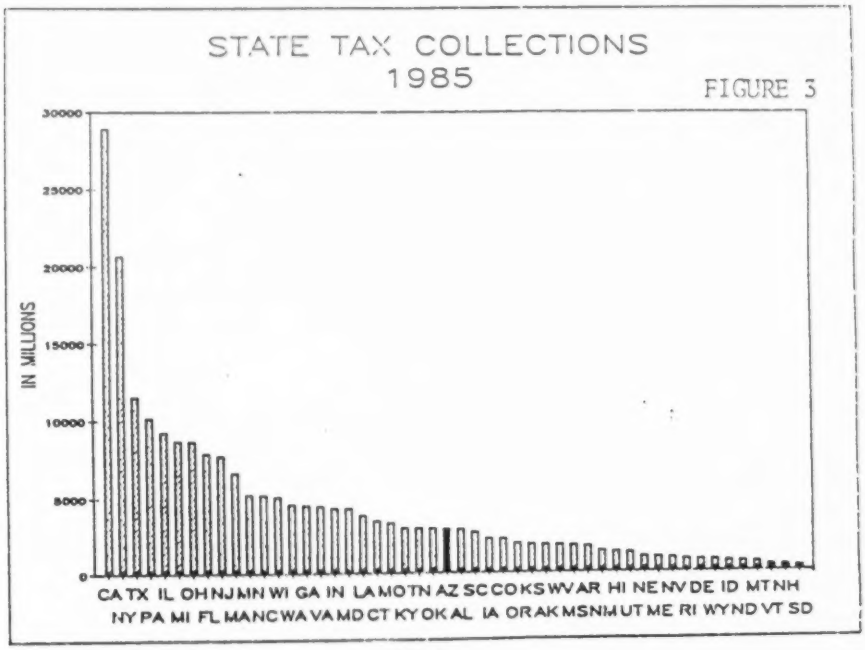


POPULATION AND TAXES

Arizona lies near the median both in state population (Figure 2) and state tax collections (Figure 3). (See Appendix A for the key to the graphs.)

Twenty-six states have greater populations than Arizona; twenty-three have lesser. Twenty-four states have larger tax collections than Arizona; twenty-five have smaller.


STATE POPULATION
1985
FIGURE 2
IN THOUSANDS
26500
23850
21200
18550
15900
13250
10600
7950
5300
2650
0
CA TX IL OH NJ GA VA MO TN WA MN KY OK AZ IA MS AR UT NM HI NH NV SD DE AK
NY PA FL MI NC MA IN WI LA MD AL SC CO CT OR KS WV NE ME ID RI MT ND VT WY


STATE TAX COLLECTIONS
1985
FIGURE 3
IN MILLIONS
30000
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
CA TX IL OH NJ MN WI GA IN LA MO TN AZ SC CO KS WV AR HI NE NV DE ID MT NH
NY PA MI FL MA NC WA VA MD CT KY OK AL IA OR AK MS NM UT ME RI WY ND VT SD

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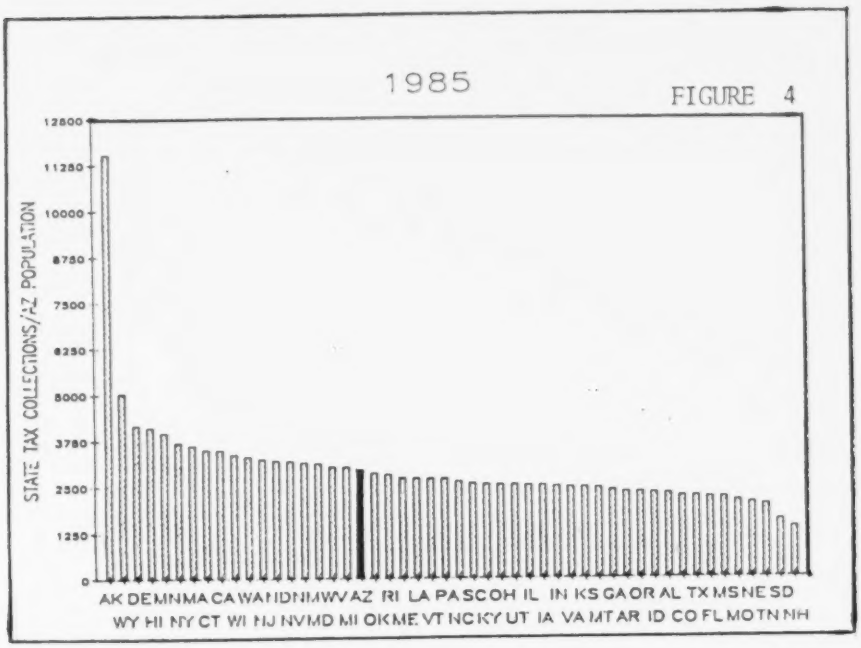
State tax collections normalized according to the population of Arizona reveal that there really is not much difference in state tax collections per capita, except for Alaska (Figure 4). Arizona is near the average.


1985
FIGURE 4
STATE TAX COLLECTIONS/AZ POPULATION
12500
11250
10000
8750
7500
6250
5000
3750
2500
1250
0
AK DE MN MA CA WA ID NM WV AZ RI LA PA SC OH IL IN KS GA OR AL TX MS NE SD
WY HI NY CT WI NJ NV MD MI OK ME VT NC KY UT IA VA MT AR ID CO FL MO TN NH

Based on population and tax data alone, we might speculate that the number of colleges and universities in Arizona, and the degree production for Arizona colleges and universities, will be found to be average. Based on population and tax data alone, we might conclude that the State of Arizona is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged, compared to other states, in its efforts to establish a quality, comprehensive system of higher education.

THE DATA

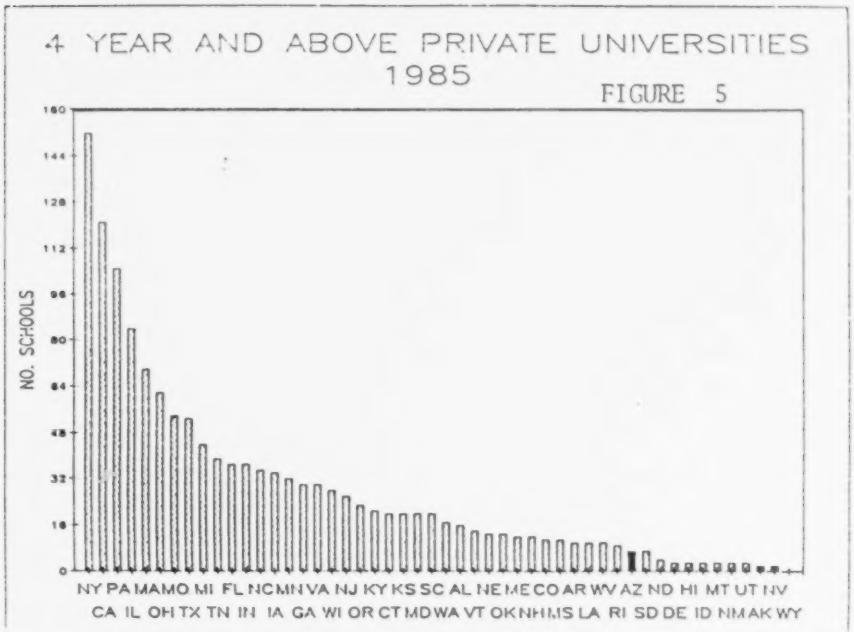
The comparative data to be presented are drawn from "State Higher Education Profiles, 1985". Assembled by the Center for Education Statistics, the data were collected through the Center's Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS). The sample year is the 1985 fiscal year, from July 1, 1984-June 30, 1985.

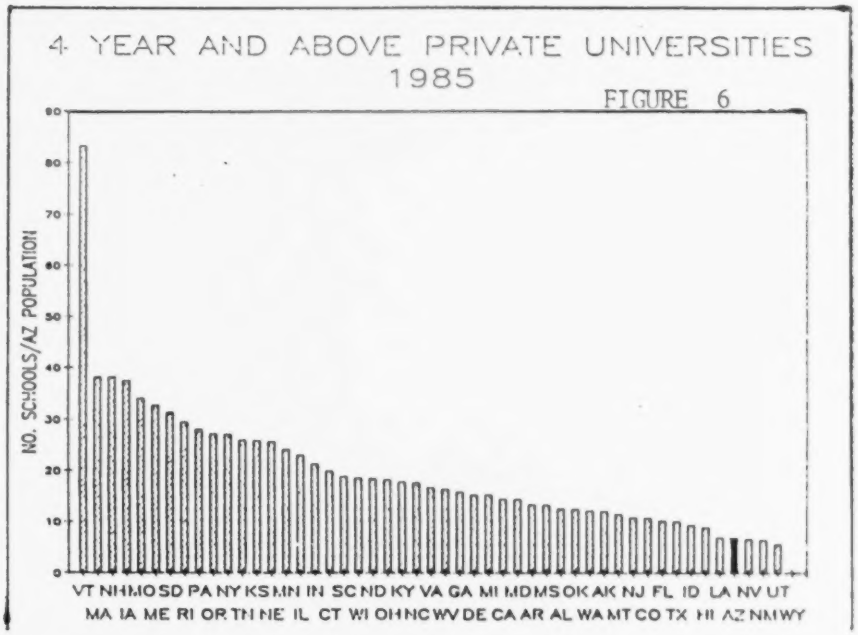
PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Compared to most other states, Arizona has very few private colleges and universities. Only one 2-year private school existed in Arizona (in 1985). There are five 4-year private colleges and two 2-year private professional colleges, yielding a total of seven 4-year and above private institutions. Viewed nationally, Arizona ranks 38th in number of 4-year and above private institutions (Figure 5). Taking population into consideration, Arizona is seen to be among seven states that have the fewest private schools per unit population. Figure 6, constructed in such a way to adjust for population differences, shows how many 4-year and above private institutions would exist in each state if the state under consideration had the population of Arizona, and if the state maintained its 1985 ratio of private institutions to population. If Vermont had Arizona's population, and had built private universities according to the 1985 Vermont ratio of private universities to state population, it would have eighty-four 4-year and above private institutions. If Minnesota had the population of Arizona, and the chief assumptions continued to hold, it would

a fewer number of private institutions per capita than Arizona.

We might conclude that Arizona has been the most conservative of all states in its propensity to establish private institutions of higher learning.

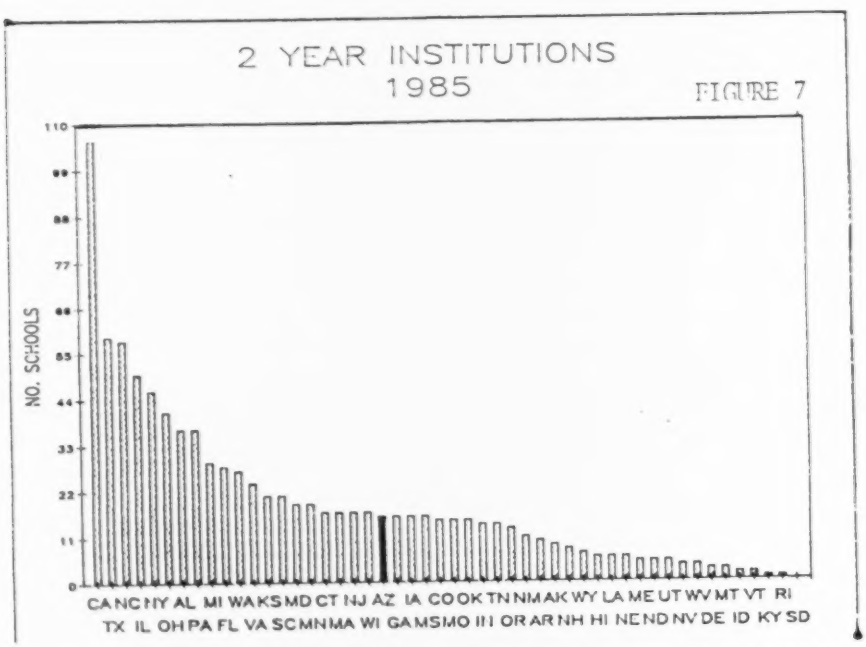

4 YEAR AND ABOVE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES
1985
FIGURE 5
NO. SCHOOLS
160
144
128
112
96
80
64
48
32
16
0
NY PA MA MO MI FL NC MN VA NJ KY KS SC AL NE ME CO AR WV AZ ND HI MT UT NV
CA IL OH TX TN IN IA GA WI OR CT MD WA VT OK NH MS LA RI SD DE ID NM AK WY


4 YEAR AND ABOVE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES
1985
FIGURE 6
NO. SCHOOLS/AZ POPULATION
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
VT NH MO SD PA NY KS MN IN SC ND KY VA GA MI MD MS OK AK NJ FL ID LA NV UT
MA IA ME RI OR TN NE IL CT WI OH NC WV DE CA AR AL WA MT CO TX HI AZ NM WY

The dominant factors, quite simply, are geographic and historical. For example, in the 19th century, when private institutions of higher education were being established in great numbers in the United States, the remote frontier territory of Arizona had not yet become a state. We might speculate that the disproportionately small number of private institutions in Arizona may have created, in the 20th century, an unusually strong pressure to establish public alternatives to higher education.

TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Arizona lies near the median in number of 2-year public institutions (Figure 7).

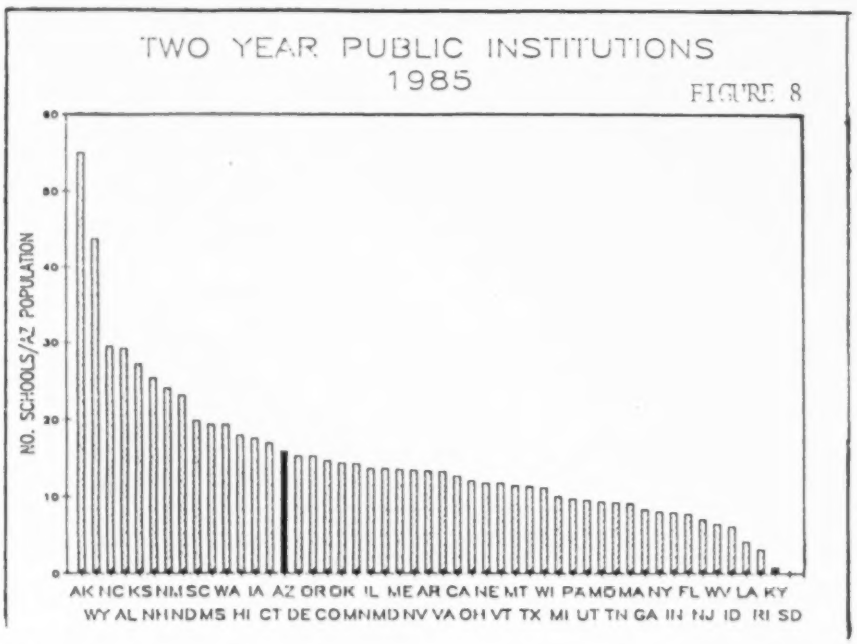

2 YEAR INSTITUTIONS
1985
FIGURE 7
NO. SCHOOLS
110
99
88
77
66
55
44
33
22
11
0
CA NC NY AL MI WA KS MD CT NJ AZ IA CO OK TN NM AK WY LA ME UT WV MT VT RI
TX IL OH PA FL VA SC MN MA WI GA MS MO IN OR AR NH HI NE ND NV DE ID KY SD

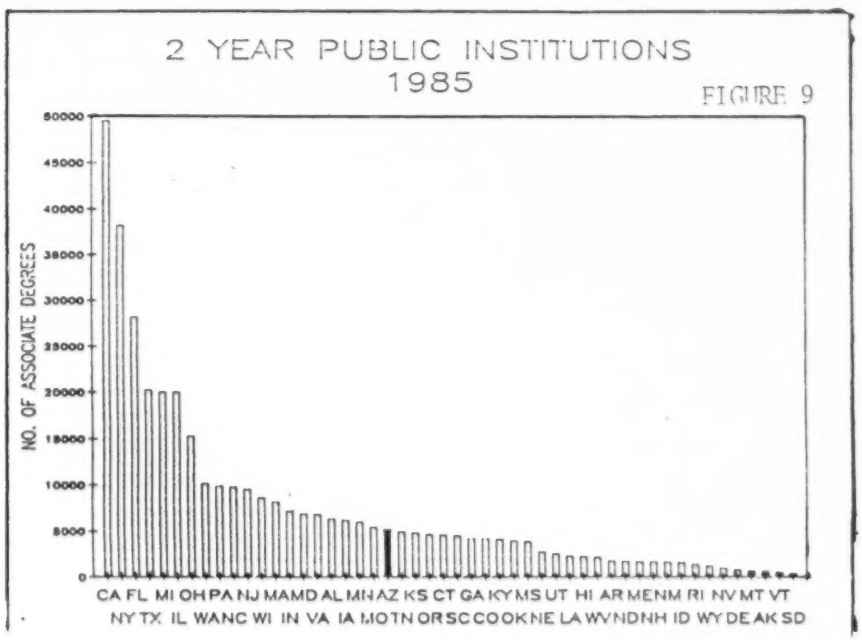
Twenty states have a greater number of 2-year public institutions; twenty nine states have fewer. When the number of 2-year public institutions is normalized according to population (Figure 8, it becomes evident that Arizona ranks 15th in the number of 2-year public institutions per capita; ...15th in its propensity to establish 2-year public institutions.

We conclude that the establishment of a relatively large number of 2-year public institutions (community colleges in Arizona may partly reflect a need to fill a void satisfied in many other states by 2-year and 4-year private colleges. Only Wyoming, Alaska, and New Mexico have lower ratios of private institutions to 2-year public institutions.

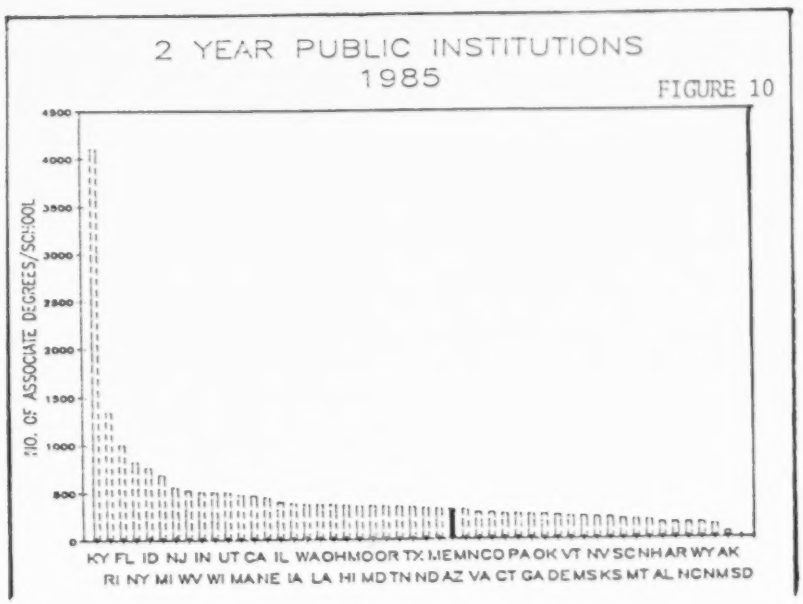
Figure 9 shows the number of associate degrees generated in 2-year public institutions in each of the states. Arizona's ranking in total number of associates degrees, just above the median, is exactly the same as its ranking in number of 2-year public institutions. Twenty states generated a larger number of associate degrees in 1985; twenty-nine states generated fewer. The states of California, New York, Florida, Texas, Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio are in a class by themselves in numbers of associate degrees generated per year. California, the leader in this category, graduated nearly 50,000 students with associate degrees in 1985, compared with Arizona's 5,000 (Figure 9).

To examine degree production at 2-year public institutions, we look at the number of associate degrees per university per year (Figure 10). Arizona's production


TWO YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
1985
FIGURE 8
NO. SCHOOLS/AZ POPULATION
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
AK NC KS NM SC WA IA AZ OR OK IL ME AR CA NE MT WI PA MO MA NY FL WV LA KY
WY AL NH ND MS HI CT DE CO MN MD NV VA OH VT TX MI UT TN GA IN NJ ID RI SD


2 YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
1985
FIGURE 9
NO. OF ASSOCIATE DEGREES
0
5000
10000
15000
20000
25000
30000
35000
40000
45000
50000
CA FL MI OH PA NJ MA MD AL MN AZ KS CT GA KY MS UT HI AR ME NM RI NV MT VT
NY TX IL WA NC WI IN VA IA MO TN OR SC CO OK NE LA WV ND NH ID WY DE AK SD

rate of 320 ranks slightly below the median. Twenty-seven states produce a higher number of associate degrees per university per year; twenty-two states produce a fewer number. Kentucky is in a class by itself, producing in excess of 4000 associate degrees per university per year (Figure 10).

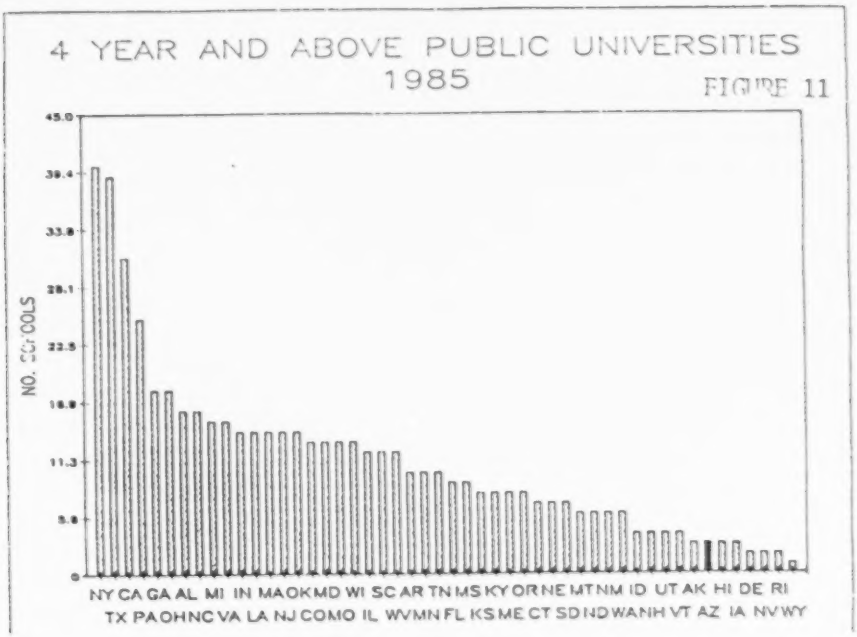


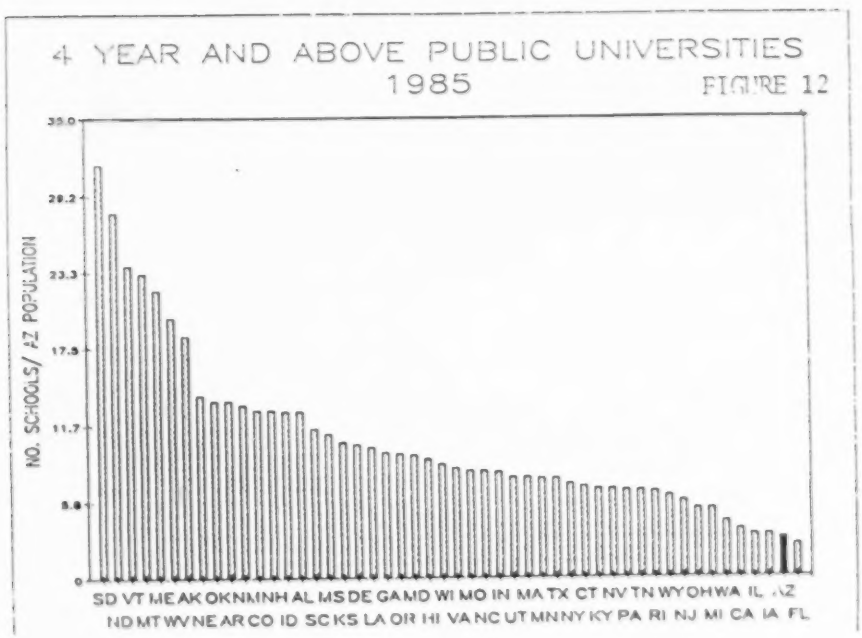
Whereas the number of two-year public universities in Arizona is above average when state taxes and state populations are taken into consideration, the production rate of associate degrees is a little below average. This fact, combined with knowledge of the scant number of private institutions in Arizona, may lead us to conclude that the three 4-year and above public institutions in Arizona must play an unusually dominant role in higher education in the state.

FOUR-YEAR AND ABOVE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Figure 11 shows the number of major public universities (4-year and above) in each of the fifty states. New York has the most with forty. Two- thirds of the states have between ten and fifteen 4-year and above public institutions. Arizona is among a group of eight states that in 1985 had three or fewer 4-year and above public universities. Alaska, Hawaii, Iowa, Delaware, Nevada, Rhode Island, and Wyoming form this group, along with Arizona.

The uniqueness of Arizona's higher education thrust is revealed in the number of public universities per unit of population in each of the fifty states (Figure 12). As described earlier, the unit of population that we choose to use is a special one: 3.2 million, the population of Arizona in 1985. Figure 12 thus reveals how many 4-year and above public universities would exist in each state if the state had the population of Arizona, and if the state maintained its present ratio of universities to population. If, for example, South Dakota had Arizona's population, and had built universities according to the 1985 ratio of universities to population in South Dakota, it would have thirty-two 4-year and above universities. If New York had the population of Arizona, and the chief assumptions continued to hold, it would have eight 4-year and above public universities. Only Florida would have a fewer number of public univer-


4 YEAR AND ABOVE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
1985
FIGURE 11
NO. SCHOOLS
45.0
39.4
33.8
28.1
22.5
16.9
11.3
5.6
0
NY CA GA AL MI IN MA OK MD WI SC AR TN MS KY OR NE MT NM ID UT AK HI DE RI
TX PA OH NC VA LA NJ CO MO IL WV MN FL KS ME CT SD ND WA NH VT AZ IA NV WY


4 YEAR AND ABOVE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
1985
FIGURE 12
NO. SCHOOLS/ AZ POPULATION
35.0
29.2
23.3
17.5
11.7
5.8
0
SD VT ME AK OK NM NH AL MS DE GA MD WI MO IN MA TX CT NV TN WY OH WA IL AZ
ND MT WV NE AR CO ID SC KS LA OR HI VA NC UT MN NY KY PA RI NJ MI CA IA FL

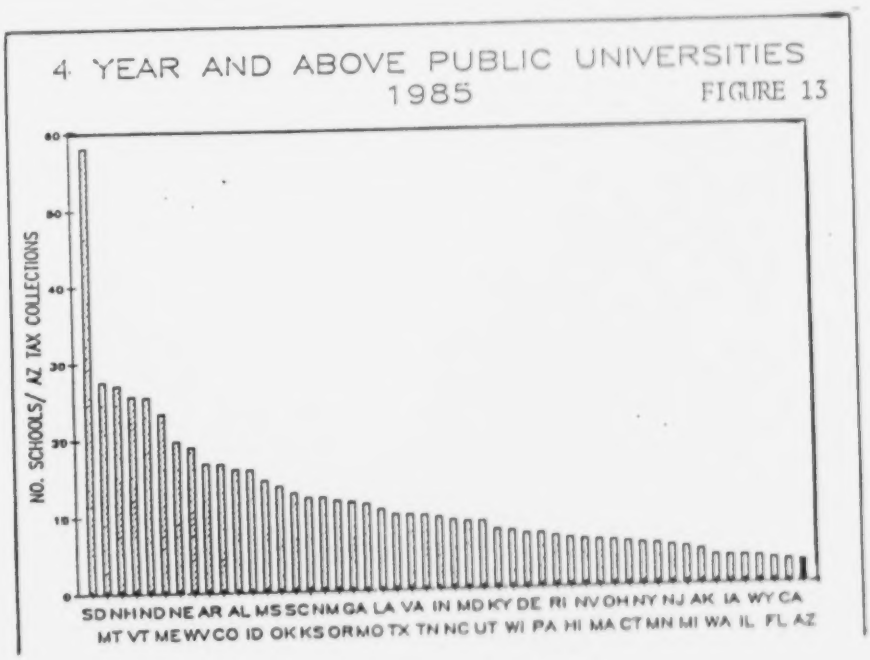
sities per capita than Arizona.

We might conclude that with the exception of Florida, we are the most conservative of all states in our propensity to establish 4-year and above public universities. We might conclude that, with the exception of Florida, we are the least overextended of all the states. Arizona would appear to have a significant competitive advantage over other states: greater value is achieved in distributing limited resources among an unusually small number of public universities, providing of course that the fundamental requirements of quality of education and access to higher education are being met.

Normalizing the data according to state tax collections yields similar results. Figure 13 shows the number of public universities per unit of tax collections in each of the fifty states.

The unit of state tax collections is again a special one: $2,945,000,000, the state tax collections for Arizona in 1985. The figure reveals how many 4-year and above public universities would exist in each state if the state received the same level of tax revenues received by Arizona, and had built universities according to the 1985 ratio of universities to tax collections. If South Dakota enjoyed Arizona's tax revenue, and had invested in universities in the manner it has to date, it would have fifty-eight 4-year and above public universities. Texas would have ten. Arizona would have the fewest number of universities per unit of tax collections.

Again we are led to conclude that of all the states, Arizona is the most conservative in its propensity to establish 4-year and above public universities. We might conclude that we are least over extended of all of the states with respect


4 YEAR AND ABOVE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
1985
FIGURE 13
NO. SCHOOLS/ AZ TAX COLLECTIONS
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
SD NH ND NE AR AL MS SC NM GA LA VA IN MD KY DE RI NV OH NY NJ AK IA WY CA
MT VT ME WV CO ID OK KS OR MO TX TN NC UT WI PA HI MA CT MN MI WA IL FL AZ

to establishing 4-year and above public institutions. We might conclude that as we plan our future we enjoy a competitive advantage over all other states.

Figure 14 shows the number of bachelor's degrees generated in 4-year and above public universities in each of the states. Arizona lies exactly at the median, with 24 generating a greater number and 25 generating a lesser number. In 1985, the Arizona universities collectively awarded approximately 10,500 bachelor's degrees.

When we look at production of bachelor's degrees as measured in degrees per university per year (Figure 15), we find that the state of Arizona has the highest productivity of any state in the nation. Arizona generates approximately 3500 bachelor's degrees per university per year. Most states produce between 500 and 1500 bachelor's degrees per university per year. We conclude that of all the states we are the most productive in our yield of baccalaureate graduates.

Data describing the production of graduate and professional degrees from state to state reveal an identical picture. Arizona lies exactly at the median in number of degrees awarded, with 25 states generating a greater number and 24 generating a lesser number (Figure 16). In 1985 the Arizona universities collectively awarded 4,000 graduate and professional degrees.

Viewing production data (Figure 17) we find that no other state exceeds Arizona in the number of graduate and professional degrees awarded per university per year. Approximately 1250 graduate and professional degrees per university were awarded in Arizona in 1985. Most states produce 300 to 600 graduate and professional degrees per university per year. We might decide that the universities in Arizona, and their faculties, are the highest producers of graduate and professional degree recipients than any state in the nation.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

When we look at first-order characteristics of higher education in Arizona, compared to those of other states, we discover that Arizona is extraordinarily unique. Full awareness of our singularity is absolutely essential in future planning.

Part of Arizona's uniqueness is a disproportionately small thrust in private education at the college and university levels. We might speculate that this fact may historically have led to compensation (or overcompensation) in the public sector of higher education. To some extent this is the case, for our system of 2-year public universities (community colleges), when viewed in the context of population and tax base, is more generous in size than that of approximately two-thirds of the other states. Yet when data are examined that describe the number of associate degrees that are generated by Arizona's 2-year public universities compared to other states, we find that the productivity is average or a little below average.

Compensation for the lack of in-state private alternatives to higher education in Arizona is seen primarily at the level of 4-year and above public universities. Compensation is not expressed in the number of universities, for when the data are normalized Arizona is seen to have the fewest 4-year and above public universities of any state in the nation.

Instead, compensation is expressed in productivity: No state is more productive than Arizona in producing baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees. The yield per university per year is significantly higher than that for any other state in the nation.

By minimizing duplication through building a bare minimum number of 4-year and above public universities, Arizona appears to have established a very favorable competitive position in the marketplace of higher education. We are by no means overextended as an educational enterprize. In fact, we appear to be have established the most conservative infrastructure of higher education than any other state. Arizona ought to be able to plan its future thoughtfully and prudently, unlike other states whose first order business might be to find ways to cut back to a less extended, more conservative posture, the prototype example of which is Arizona. Our non-overextended position permits the opportunity for the state to concentrate its resources in ways that will enhance the value of higher education in Arizona.

Even though certain first-order competitive advantages exist, we are not a rich state. We do not, unfortunately, enjoy a comparative resource advantage. Neither are we disadvantaged. Our median ranking both in population and state tax revenues reminds us of our "average" resource potential.

We might suggest that just as the state has, to date, concentrated its resources in only three public universities, so each university must decide on the number and nature of academic areas in which its resources should be most heavily concentrated. The available budget resources simply will not permit the universities to build excellence in all academic programs. Instead, universities must continue to identify priority areas based in part on inherent strategic advantages born out of history, geography, and existing faculty strength; and in part on a careful assessment of which academic activities will most benefit economic development and quality of life in the state, nation, and world. Quality and value of higher educational opportunities are apt to improve in direct relation to the extent that unnecessary, unwarranted duplication of academic thrusts within the three Arizona universities can be avoided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Resist pressures to establish additional 4-year and above comprehensive public universities and, instead, concentrate the available limited resources in the three existing Arizona universities. If this is done while other states seek to find ways to cut back to less extended, more conservative postures, Arizona will capitalize on its competitive advantage.

- Recognizing that available budget resources will not permit the building of excellence in all academic programs, insist that the universities more effectively concentrate resources in select programs which, by virtue of inherent strategic advantages, can rise to prominence in ways consistent with university mission.

- Be constantly vigilant for ways to eliminate unnecessary, unwarranted duplication of academic programs or subprograms within or among the

three Arizona universities.

In short, quality and value of higher educational opportunities are apt to improve in direct relation to the extent that resources can be judiciously but forcefully allocated within the system and within each university. We should not fail to take fullest advantage of the inherent first-order competitive edge that Arizona derives from its economy of scales.

APPENDIX A

KEY FOR GRAPHS

AL	=	Alabama
AK	=	Alaska
AZ	=	Arizona
AR	=	Arkansas
CA	=	California
CO	=	Colorado
CT	=	Connecticut
DE	=	Delaware
FL	=	Florida
GA	=	Georgia
HI	=	Hawaii
ID	=	Idaho
IL	=	Illinois
IN	=	Indiana
IA	=	Iowa
KS	=	Kansas
KY	=	Kentucky
LA	=	Louisiana
ME	=	Maine
MD	=	Maryland
MA	=	Massachusetts
MI	=	Michigan
MN	=	Minnesota
MS	=	Mississippi
MO	=	Missouri
MT	=	Montana
NE	=	Nebraska
NV	=	Nevada
NH	=	New Hampshire
NJ	=	New Jersey
NM	=	New Mexico
NY	=	New York
NC	=	North Carolina
ND	=	North Dakota
OH	=	Ohio
OK	=	Oklahoma
OR	=	Oregon
PA	=	Pennsylvania
RI	=	Rhode Island
SC	=	South Carolina
SD	=	South Dakota
TN	=	Tennessee
TX	=	Texas
UT	=	Utah
VT	=	Vermont
VA	=	Virginia
WA	=	Washington
WV	=	West Virginia
WI	=	Wisconsin
WY	=	Wyoming

ENDNOTES

1. "4-year and above" institutions include colleges and universities that award baccalaureate degrees only, and universities that award graduate and professional degrees in addition to baccalaureate degrees.